
A
PLEA for INFANTS:
OR, THE
Scripture Doctrine
OF
WATER-BAPTISM,
STATED.

[Price One Shilling.]

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WHEREIN

That famous Apologist, Mr. ROBERT BARCLAY's first Principle, which denies WATER-BAPTISM, is refuted.—The Reverend Mr. T. EMLYN's *previous Question* is largely consider'd;—what St. PAUL means by the Children of Christians being *holy*,—and what St. PETER, by Baptism now *saving* us;—the most *plausible Objections* to the baptizing of Infants, impleaded;—*Adult-Baptizers* have neither *Precept* nor *Precedent* in the New Testament to support their Practice;—Christian Parents encouraged to baptize their Infant-Offspring;—some proper Reflections upon the *Use* and *Abuse* of the Rite.

—Επει αρα τα τεκνα υμων ακαθαρτα εσι· νυν δε αγια εσι.

Pauli ad Corinth. i Epist. vii. 14.

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, 1742.

REPLY TO INFANTS OR THE Scripture Doctrine OF WATER-BAPTISM



That infants are not to be baptized, is a doctrine which the Church of England has always maintained. The Church of England is a Church of Christ, and what the Church of Christ has always maintained, the Church of England has always maintained. The Church of England is a Church of Christ, and what the Church of Christ has always maintained, the Church of England has always maintained. The Church of England is a Church of Christ, and what the Church of Christ has always maintained, the Church of England has always maintained.

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LONDON:
 Printed by T. Cooper, at the Office of the Press, No. 1, St. Paul's Church-yard, 1792.



The general SCHEME.

§ I. **W**ater-Baptism found to be a christian rite, and not superseded by the Spirit. Against Mr. ROBERT BARCLAY's principle.

§ II. Water-Baptism has no renovating, saving efficacy, but in adult persons is expressive of an open declaration of their belief in the christian doctrine.

§ III. Did not qualify for the miraculous impartments, but sometimes preceded, and sometimes followed them.

§ IV. Baptism had a moral sense, and imported resignation to sufferings.

§ V. It was expressive of immunity or privilege, as it manumitted the baptized Jews from the Mosaic law.

§ VI. The most universal sense, a symbol of purity.

§ VII. The Reverend Mr. THOMAS EMLYN's previous Question consider'd.—

§ VIII. The 1 Cor. vii. 14. consider'd, under which is shewn, what we may understand, by the child of a believing parent being HOLY.

What followeth these Sections, is chiefly answers to twelve Objections.

Obj. I. That the Abrahamic covenant, and the circumcising of infants under it, or the baptizing of the children of Proselytes, are no evidences

dences in favour of infant-baptism ; since it is not proved, that baptism is in the place of circumcision.—

Obj. II. *Infants are not capable subjects of baptism, since the original commission of our Lord's, is, first to teach or disciple, and after that to baptize.*

Obj. III. *There is an express mention made in the New Testament of adult persons being baptized, but an entire silence concerning the baptism of infants ; since therefore there is neither precept nor precedent in this case, it will follow, that to baptize infants, is to be wise above what is written.*

Obj. IV. *Baptism is of very considerable importance in the affair of mens salvation, as it is recommended in the writings of the New Testament, Mark xvi. 16. Acts xvi. 31. ch. ii. 38. Hence it cannot, with any propriety, be applied to infants, they being incapable of understanding any thing about it.*

Obj. V. *But infants are innocent, pure, and holy ; and therefore have no need of washing ; and baptism must therefore be very impertinently applied to them.*

Obj. VI. *Others object, that to represent children as pure and holy, or innocent, is to deny the truth ; for they are all born in original sin, and are all, by nature, children of wrath ; and therefore, baptism should be applied to them, as the laver of regeneration.—That baptism hereupon, must have a regenerating efficacy ; the water being sanctified to the mystical washing away*
of

of sin, as well as its being a rite, by which the infant is incorporated into the body of Christ's church.

Obj. VII. Mr. BARCLAY attempts to destroy the doctrine of Water-Baptism, from 1 Pet. iii. 21. viz. because water cannot purify farther than the flesh.—

Obj. VIII. Mr. BARCLAY has also attempted to destroy Water-Baptism, from 1 Cor. i. 14, 17. viz. the apostles not being sent to baptize.—

Obj. IX. Is from Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11. and Rom. ii. 28, 29. which supposes, that the spirituality of the christian dispensation, will admit of no positive, external rite.

Obj. X. The modern Deist, who is for rejecting revelation, and being absolutely guided by the light of nature, may perhaps object, that to use the external rite of baptism, in a religious sense, is inconsistent with the pure documents of reason, or the light of nature.

Obj. XI. Altho' baptism might possibly become a moral mean, to an adult person, yet we see not how it can affect an infant. For, supposing it to die in infancy without baptism, it is a mere jest to imagine, that it will be worse treated by the universal Father, than if it had been baptized; for the omission of baptism was no matter of blame in the infant.

I. Encouragement, added to the above arguments, for christian parents baptizing their infants, is, those kind expressions and notices which the author of our religion shewed to infants.

II. St.

II. *St. Peter's declaration, Acts ii. 39. The promise being made to the children of the Jewish converts, as well as to them; which would have excited their prejudices, if the initiating rite had been denied their children.*

Obj. XII. *The christian doctrine was not calculated to indulge mens prejudices, but to combat them;—and John the Baptist has actually combated this prejudice of the Jews about their infants being baptized, Matth. iii. 9.*

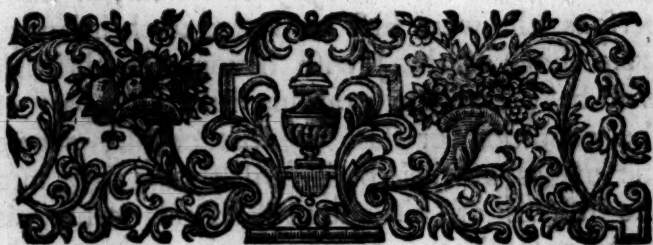
III. *Encouragement to infant-baptism, is grounded on Eph. vi. 4. viz. christian parents being commanded to educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—*

IV. *Encouragement which professing christians have to baptize their offspring, is, their being actually concerned in the doctrine of remission, or, in the efficacy of Christ's death.*

V. *The conduct is fit and reasonable; for the church of Christ would not be visible, if no external rites or marks of it were allowed. But all good societies merely humane, as well as all divine constitutions, since God had a distinguished people or church in the world, have consider'd infants as belonging to their communities, and have admitted them under such or such qualifications: so that the baptism of infants is in perfect conformity to the measures and rules of all good government, therefore fit and becoming.*

Lastly, Some proper reflections upon the use and abuse of the rite.

A P L E A



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PLEA for INFANTS:

OR, THE

Scripture Doctrine of WATER-BAPTISM.



DOES any man give into the observance of a religious *rite*? it is highly reasonable, that he should carefully examine into the foundation upon which such *rite* is supported. Is there a *rite* said to be observed by christians? what is the authority on which they ground their observance of it? This will be an enquiry very becoming those who use *Water-Baptism*; viz. how the *rite* stands supported in the writings of the *New Testament*.

THESE writings are indeed the only proper directory to a christian, or they are the most

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plain

plain and infallible rule of his conduct—nevertheless, inasmuch as the *first christians*, or those persons who were first converted to christianity, were those of the Jewish nation, the christian will be allowed to examine into any part of the condition or state of that people, where the usages of their polity will throw light into the subject of his enquiry. And nothing is more natural, than to enquire how this people can be supposed to bear the change of their *rites*.

§ I. SHOULD we ask what it is that warrants the use of Water-Baptism, as a *religious rite*, among christians?—It will be told us, that *John*, the harbinger of Jesus, who came before him to prepare the way for the introduction of his kingdom, did indeed come baptizing with water unto repentance: but, having no symbols of miraculous power to attest or recommend his ministry, he declares, that he who came after him, should baptize *with the Holy Spirit and with fire*, *Matth. iii. 11.* which we afterwards find was the *only way* in which Jesus did ever baptize, as may be learnt from *John iv. 2.* compared with *ch. xx. 22.*—unless that baptism he applied to the feet of his disciples, *ch. xiii.* begin.—So that our Lord's baptizing with *the Holy Spirit and with fire*, may refer to the power he gave to his disciples of working miracles, during his ministry among them; and to those amazing impartments of the Spirit at *Pentecost*, which were made by the visible appearance

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appearance or display of forky, pointed flames ; or, as it is render'd, *cloven tongues, as of fire*, *Acts* ii. 3.

BUT then, altho' our Lord did never himself initiate any into his kingdom by *Water-Baptism*, yet his disciples did, as appears from *John* iv. 2. before cited ;— *besides*, baptism with water was used to *Saul*, by *Ananias*— to the *Eunuch*, by *Philip*— to the Gentile converts, who had actually received the *Holy Spirit*, at the command of *Peter*— to the *Jayler* and his household, and to *Lydia* and her's. All which instances were after the descent of the Spirit. And this usage of water was understood as a rite by which men were initiated into the kingdom of Christ.—So that the famous *Apolo- gist* has greatly mistook in his reasoning, who thus argues, *viz.* { That since Christ's baptism was not a baptism of water, but of the Spirit, therefore *baptism of water* was SUPERSEDED by the dispensation of Jesus.'^a

THE Messiah introduced his dispensation with the same doctrine which *John* taught, as requisite to his baptism, in all adult persons, *viz. repentance*, *Matth.* iv. 17. *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* ; or is now ushering in upon you. *Mark* i. 14, 15. *Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*— And *St. Peter*, after the resurrection and ascension of our Lord,

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says,

^a *Vid.* Barclay's *Apol.* p. 422, 423.

says, *Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*, Acts ii. 38.—Surely nothing can be more plain, than that *Water-Baptism* stands distinguished, in the *true christian divinity*, from the *baptism of the Spirit*, notwithstanding the *Apologist* above referred to, has denied it by his reasonings.—It stands join'd to repentance, as previously requisite to the remission of sins, and to the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

§ II. NOT that Water-Baptism had, even in the apostolick age, any *renovating, saving, efficacy*, tho' thus join'd with repentance, as will hereafter more fully appear—neither could from its own nature, become a *virtual* qualification for the extraordinary impartments;—but there were other reasons in the divine OEconomy that render'd it fit and proper. For we may, at first sight, in a great measure account for the wisdom and prudence of the institution, or shew how it appeared *fit*, inasmuch as the *miraculous gifts* were intended to *engage the attention* of men unto, as well *confirm* the doctrine of christianity; and therefore, it was highly expedient that those, who embraced the doctrine, should by some publick, solemn act, *declare* their belief of that doctrine; the miraculous attestations of which they had either received, or were going to receive. This was a confirmation to *all observers*, that these *charismata*

rismata were confined to the name and faith of Jesus.

§ III. I INTIMATED, that the *miraculous gifts* were conferred both *before* and *after* baptism : for, lest men should imagine that there was any *efficacy* in baptism, which could convey such extraordinary abilities, the revelation informs us of some having these gifts *before*, and others *after* Water-Baptism. So those that Philip *baptized*, *Acts* viii. 12. had not the Holy Spirit till after, see ver. 15, 17.— And, *on the other hand*, we are expressly told, that the *Holy Spirit* fell on all them which heard the word ; even upon Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit, *Acts* x. 44, 45. upon which Peter says, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*, ver. 48. Here *baptism* was *after* they had received the Holy Spirit.—

§ IV. *Farther*, Baptism had a *moral sense* belonged to it, as it imported an open, voluntary devotedness and resignation to sufferings and death.— *Such as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death*, Rom. vi. 3.— *else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all ? why are they then baptized for the dead ?* 1 Cor. xv. 29. The hazardous state into which the *first christians* were brought, by an open profession of christi-

christianity, with great propriety entitled their baptism, *a baptism of death*.

§ V. ANOTHER sense did belong to the baptism of the first christians, expressive of benefit and privilege, and that was, that mens being baptized *in the name of Christ*, manifestly shewed the *Mosaic Law* to be *dead*, not only to the *Gentile*, but to the *Jew* so baptized; Gal. iii. 27. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*; all become the children of God, by faith in Christ, *and all are one in him*, ver. 26, 28. Forasmuch as the promise to *Abraham*, was not to his seeds, as of many, *but as of one*; and to thy seed, *which is Christ*. So that the *Gentiles*, being baptized into Christ, could not possibly be under obligation to any *special*^b demand of the *Mosaic OEconomy*; and the *Jew* himself must be free, since the highest character which the law had sustain'd, was that of a *school-master* to lead to Christ, *Rom. x. 4*. Christ being the *end* of the law for righteousness, *i. e.* the *terminus, limit, bound, or grand effect* of the rectitude of the law, center'd in Christ. Nothing could have justified its ritual and ceremonial canons, had they not served to point out to them the excellency of that dispensation which Christ, their promised Messiah, should introduce. So that a *Jew*, being once baptized into Christ, could no longer need the tuition

^b By special, I mean, what belonged to the Jews as a separate people.

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tion of the law; but was manumitted from it, being dead to that wherein he was held, *Rom.* vii. 6. and *Col.* ii. 12. and 20 *ver.* compared.

§ VI. BUT the most universal sense of a moral nature, belonging to Water-Baptism, as a christian rite, is, *its being a symbol of that purity*, which the whole constitution of Jesus demands.

§ VII. PREVIOUS to the *defence* that may be made for the baptism of Infants, it will be proper to consider the arguments of some, against the usage of *any Water-Baptism at all*. And here I would principally remark on the argument used by that worthy confessor Mr. *Emlyn*^c. It appears to amount to this, *viz.*
“ That as baptism may be supposed to come
“ in the place, or to succeed the Jewish cus-
“ tom or usage with regard to the *Profelytes*,
“ whom they baptized together with their chil-
“ dren. But having initiated them and theirs
“ by baptism, all the children of such Prose-
“ lytes, born after their Profelytism, were
“ looked upon as baptized children; for the
“ baptism of their parents having made them
“ holy, they, their offspring, must be holy :
“ so that their needs no grafting in of the
“ *natural branches.*”

IN order to our discerning how far this will carry us, let it be granted, that none of the descen-

^c See his previous *Question*, in the first Volume of his *Tracts*.

descendants of *Profelytes*, born after Profelytism, were baptized ;— nevertheless, it will be proper to enquire whether they were looked upon as so holy, that they had no need of any *rite* to ascertain that their holiness ? if this should not prove to be the case, with great submission, I am inclined to think, the argument will lose all its force.—

To see this, we must endeavour to form some clear idea of *Profelytism*, or the *manner* of their being treated in the Jewish polity. As to *Profelytes*, we are inform'd, that they were of *two* sorts, the Profelytes of the covenant, called by the *Rabbins*, the Profelytes of righteousness ; and the Profelyte or Stranger of, or within the gate.

THE Profelyte of righteousness submitted to circumcision, and to the whole Mosaical pædogy. The Profelyte of the gate was suffered to dwell among them—was called an inhabitant, but was not circumcised, neither did he conform to the Mosaic rites and ordinances, only was tied to the obedience of those commandments, which the *Hebrew doctors* call, *The seven commandments of Noah*.

WE have no accounts from any writer, of their applying the initiating baptismal rite to the Profelyte of the gate, or to his children ; and yet we have very particular descriptions of their manner of initiating a Profelyte of the covenant : “ for, according to the difference
“ of the *sex*, and the difference of *times*, the
“ rites of initiation varied. To the making
“ of

“ of a *male Profelyte* at first, three things were
 “ required ; as 1. circumcision ; 2. a kind of
 “ purification by water ; 3. the blood of obla-
 “ tion, which was commonly two turtles or
 “ pigeons.—To the making a *woman Profelyte*,
 “ were required *only* purification by water, and
 “ oblation.—Now, because the Jews have nei-
 “ ther altar nor sacrifice, they say, that for the
 “ *males*, circumcision and purification by water
 “ sufficeth ; and for the *females*, only purifica-
 “ tion by water ^d.”

ANOTHER writer observes, “ that there was
 “ some distance of time between the male
 “ Profelyte being *circumcised*, and *baptized* ;
 “ the latter not being till the pain of circum-
 “ cision was over, or the sore healed—and
 “ that altho’ such as were of age, and baptized
 “ by the Jews, were first instructed in the
 “ principles of their religion, and in the im-
 “ port of what they went about ; yet we are
 “ not hence to conclude, that *children* and *in-*
 “ *fants*, who were incapable of instruction,
 “ were not admitted into the Church by bap-
 “ tism. It is *most certain*, that they baptized
 “ children, and generally with their parents :
 “ and, if the parents were dead, the Consisto-
 “ ry of *three* took care of their baptism. If
 “ an Israelite, says *Maimonides*, takes up, or
 “ finds an heathen infant, and baptize him for
 “ a Profelyte, he becomes a member of the
 “ Church ; but children, who were baptized

^d Godwin’s *Moses and Aaron*, p. 11, 12.

“ in their infancy, had the liberty to retract,
 “ which adult persons had not.”

THE same writer mentions a farther difference between the *Profelytes of the covenant*, and the *Profelytes of the gate*.—— “ The former were counted as real, tho’ adopted
 “ Jews, bound to the same observances with
 “ them, and conversed as freely with them,
 “ as if they had been so born; neither might
 “ they eat, drink, or deal with the Gentiles,
 “ more than the native Jews, lest they become
 “ unclean. They worshipped in the same
 “ court of the Temple with the Hebrews—
 “ and were partakers with them in all privileges both divine and human— whereas the
 “ *Profelytes of the gate* were such Gentiles, as
 “ were admitted to the worship of the God
 “ of *Israel*, and the hopes of a future life, but
 “ were not *circumcised*, nor yet conformed to
 “ the *Mosaical rites*.—— And tho’ admitted to
 “ worship in the Temple, yet, because they were
 “ uncircumcised, they were so far looked upon
 “ as Gentiles, as not to be received into the
 “ same court with the *Profelytes of the covenant*, but were esteemed *unclean*, and had
 “ their particular court assigned them in their
 “ worship of God, which was called *the Court of the Gentiles*, and *of the unclean*; nor were
 “ they permitted to dwell in the city of *Jerusalem*.”

• Lewis’s Antiq. of Heb. Repub. vol. ii. p. 460, 461.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 33, 34.

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THIS account of the *two* sorts of Profelytes, will allow us a proper foundation for the following remarks.

1. IT is not at all strange, that we have no intimations of their ever baptizing the Profelytes of the gate, or their children; since they were looked upon as *unclean* by them, tho' they were admitted to worship at the same Temple; which they would not have been, had the Jews baptized them.—Moreover,

2. As they were *uncircumcised*, they, *i. e.* *the males*, had no right to such purification by water, for it was only made use of to such Profelytes who had submitted to circumcision, and to their children; or to such children whom they adopted as *Profelytes of the covenant*, being orphans.

3. THE infants of Profelytes of the covenant, tho' admitted along with their parents by circumcision, baptism, and oblation, the *males*; and by baptism and oblation, the *females*; yet they were in their generations subject to the whole Mosaic constitution; and therefore, tho' it was not requisite that their future offspring should be baptized, as the *immediate* offspring of *Gentilism* was required to be, yet they remained under the same obligations to circumcision and oblation, that the offspring of native Hebrews were under: so that the male descendants of these Profelytes were subject to circumcision, and the female descendants were to have the same *rites* perform'd for them, that

were perform'd for the female children of native Jews.

4. HENCE it will follow, that *christian baptism* cannot, with propriety, be looked upon as coming in the room and place of the baptism of Profelytes of the covenant—that is to say, it does not hence follow, that because baptism was not applied to the future male descendants of Profelytes, that therefore the future offspring of christian converts are not to be baptized: forasmuch as the descendants of the *Profelytes of the covenant* were, in after generations, subjected to the proper *initiating* rites of that constitution; so that altho' they were esteemed no longer *prophane*, as wanting the baptismal *rite*, and were esteemed *holy*, as the natural branches of an holy root, yet they needed this sort of grafting, *viz.* the initiating rites; and the initiating *rites* were applied to them in virtue of their being the branches of an *holy* root.

To ask here, the reason of the institution, and to object and say, what good could this do infants, who were perfectly incapable of receiving any moral benefit by it? would hardly be to treat an express command of God to *Abraham*, and to the *Jewish Lawgiver*, with becoming modesty.

ON the other hand, may we not with much more propriety conclude, that inasmuch as the infants of Jews and Profelytes had no *personal qualification* for the initiating *rite*, by which they were distinguished from the infants of
unbe-

unbelievers, and were thereupon own'd and admitted as parties in the *Abrahamic covenant*; it is but reasonable to suppose, that the infants of christians are as capable subjects of *baptism*, it being the *initiating rite* by which their parents were confess'd and own'd to be parties in the christian covenant.—It is plain, that the children of Jews, &c. were admitted in virtue of their parents belief, or in virtue of their professing their belief in the true God—and why may not ours?

WE are confessedly so fond of our infant-offspring, as to allow them capable of rights and privileges, which the *civil law* invests in them, by virtue of *intail*, or *other tenure* of possessions; and hereupon they are deemed legal claimants, or are esteemed lawful heirs of inheritances.—Notwithstanding which, as the children of Proselytes, baptized in their infancy, had a liberty to *retract*, when of mature age, and not abide by the engagement; so the lawful heirs of possessions, estates, or honours, may, by an act of treason or rebellion, forfeit those their *rights*, or become disabled from inheriting when, or even before they arrive at the age of full possession. And thus, the *infants of christians*, (as well as of Jewish Proselytes, or those of noble or high birth among men) tho' they are heirs of the spiritual inheritance, and as such have received the *rite of investiture*, yet they may reject the terms, and not comply with the conditions of possession; and so *finally* be disinherited.

WHAT

WHAT has been offered, might give us some light into that famous passage of St. Paul's, 1 Cor. vii. 14. *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.* But, as there appears to be something very important in settling the sense of the apostle about the HOLINESS of a christian's child; I shall chuse to take some very particular notice of it.

AND by their being holy, I do not apprehend, he can possibly mean their being so in a *personal, moral sense*; but rather, he should intend the *privileges and advantages* to which a believer's child is manifestly born. In no other sense can I perceive, that the husband sanctifies the wife, or the wife the husband, but as the one or the other has the prospect of being better'd by such affinity. And thus the child may be looked upon as holy, its believing parent seeing himself obliged to dedicate it to God, and to educate and bring it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Nor is the language harsh, or unnatural, by which the apostle has thus distinguished between the child of a christian parent, and the child of infidel-parents; since the one was likely to be educated in the fear and worship of the true God, and the other in the fear and worship of false Gods—the *one* was to be looked upon by its parent, as the offspring of the universal Father, who had given it birth and being; the *other*, as being obliged to *Diana* or
Proser-

Proserpina for its birth, health and safety ; she being the goddess to whom the Greeks paid their devotions, as the great protectress of their pregnant and teeming women :— the one to be devoted by pure water to the care and protection of heaven ; the other to be carried round a fire made for that purpose, in the arms of the midwife, on the *fifth* day after its birth, as the means of its purification, which, we are told, was the custom of the *Greeks*.

THE imagination is wild, that *St. Paul* could intend by the expression, that one parent's being a christian, *would sanctify whoring, or make the offspring, begot out of wedlock, truly legitimate.* The christian doctrine is too chaste and pure, to admit of any such unchaste and impure inference.—

PERHAPS we may find out something to which the apostle might allude, or to which the expression stood *rather* opposed, as well among the *Greeks* as *Jews*. The constitution of the *Jews* made it a prophane, impure, or unholy offspring, if it had for *one* of its parents an infidel, see *Deut. xxiii. 2.* The law of *Moses* says, *A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation.* “ The word in the Hebrew is *Mamzer*, and is conceived not only to “ signify one begotten in simple fornication, out “ of the state of marriage, but a person, whether *male* or *female*, born of any woman “ whom the law prohibited them to have “ knowledge of, whether it was by violence “ or consent.— A person thus unlawfully be-
“ gotten,

“ gotten, was not to marry with an Israelite,
 “ as all the *doctors*, none excepted, expound
 “ it, as Mr. *Selden* observes^g;” “ nor must
 “ a soldier marry the *fair captive*, unless she
 “ was baptized, and made a Profelyte of
 “ righteousness, as the Jewish doctors agree^h.”

HE might by this expression, *else were your children unclean, but now are they holy*, have an eye to some Grecian laws and customs; as,
 “ They only shall be reckon’d citizens (by the
 “ civil law of *Athens*) whose parents are both
 “ so.—He was to be looked upon as a *bastard*,
 “ whose mother was not free—and
 “ none of spurious birth, whether *male* or *female*,
 “ were allowed to inherit either in sacred
 “ or civil things, from the time of *Euclides*
 “ being *Archon*ⁱ.—Tho’ in some places of
 “ *Greece*, whoever had a citizen for his father,
 “ tho’ his mother was a foreigner; in others,
 “ those also who were born of free women,
 “ when their fathers were foreigners, passed
 “ for *legitimate*, and inherited the freedom of
 “ the city they were born in, and all privileges
 “ consequent thereto^k.”

^ THUS may we see the great probability there is, that the apostle *Paul* might have his eye on the laws and customs of the *Greeks*, some of which, in that famous city of *Athens*, treated children as *bastards*, if born of parents, who were not both free; and such became disabled

^g *Antiq. of Heb. Repub. Vol. iii. p. 265.*

^h *P. 261.*

ⁱ *Dr. Potter’s Archæol. Græca, Vol. i. p. 151.*

^k *Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 336.*

abled to inherit either in sacred or civil things. With what beauty and elegancy does he thus address to the converted *Corinthian Greek*, whether *male* or *female* parent; *q. d.* "I pray
 " you, have no uneasy thoughts about your
 " *unconverted partner*, or the *offspring* of such
 " unbelieving wife or husband; for to you all
 " the privileges of the christian covenant belong;
 " and by your means your *unconverted partner*
 " may be converted, and reap the unspeakable
 " benefit! and as to your offspring, it has an un-
 " doubted *right* to the benefits and privileges of
 " the christian constitution or kingdom, and you
 " may by baptism own it, look upon it as *holy*,
 " and treat it as an admitted, acknowledged
 " member of this kingdom. The laws of
 " Christ do not exclude it, as the laws of *Ju-*
 " *daism* would have done, or as the laws of
 " *Athens*, tho' one of you is yet an *alien* and
 " *foreigner*."——

Besides, the apostle has used the word *holy*, when speaking of subjects, as little capable of *sanctity*, as an infant. This every one must allow, who reads *1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5.* for there he has declared even of *meats*, the food and aliment of men, that it is capable of being *sanctified* by the word of God, and prayer.— May not then an infant be called holy, or be esteemed sanctified, on the faith and piety of its parent, or by an act of dedication of it to God, as well as a man's food be said to be sanctified, by a religious act of the eater?—

Objection I. It is objected, that to talk of the *Abrahamic* covenant, or to mention the circumcising of *Abraham's* male children, and the children of the Profelytes to Judaism, in all generations from *Abraham* to Christ, is nothing at all to the purpose, for it is not proved that *baptism* is in the place of circumcision.

IN defence of infants it is offered, that it is very pertinent to mention the *Abrahamic* covenant, and to take notice of infants having the sign or seal of it, from the time of *Abraham*, till the christian dispensation took place; forasmuch as the *Abrahamic* covenant is no other than the *christian* covenant, the very same in its nature and tendency. This is expressly asserted by St. Paul, in his epistle to the *Galatians*; more particularly see *ch. iii. 16, 17.* for the promise made to *Abraham* was this, viz. *that in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*; which seed was no other than Christ;—the which covenant with *Abraham* was confirmed before of God in Christ, four hundred and thirty years before the law.—It will then be incumbent on the *Objectors* to shew, why not only the natural male descendants of *Abraham* should all be oblig'd to receive the sign or seal of this covenant in their infancy; but also all the infants of the Profelytes of the covenant, of whatever nation; and yet, that when the rite of initiation is changed, and become

come capable of being applied to *both* sexes, that infants should not be allowed to partake of it.—There is nothing in the *nature* of the covenant to forbid this, because it is the *self-same* covenant, of which infants were initiated parties for *nineteen hundred* years, or thereabouts.—Surely, it will be necessary (in the eye of impartial judges) that they, who *oppose*, do more than say, *that infants are no where commanded to be baptized, under the full exhibition of the same gracious covenant.*—

If children were in all ages esteemed as parties or members of the true church, ever since God had a distinguish'd people in the world, we cannot give up the *infant-right* on account of a *mere* silence: but may with more reason conclude, that as the *painful rite* is abolished, and no rite of initiation in use among christians, but *baptism*, they must have an undoubted claim to that *rite*, unless there be something in the *rite* itself that is forbidding, or of which they are not equally capable with the former rite, which they underwent. *But*—there is no manner of difficulty lies in their way here, for the rite is in its own nature much more easy, *and more extensive*, as shall be consider'd hereafter. But perhaps there may be something in the *conditions* stipulated.

Obj. II. For it is objected, that infants are not capable subjects of baptism, since the *original commission* of our Lord's was, that his disciples should go teach all nations,

baptizing them ; and therefore *teaching* must precede baptism.

WE grant, who contend for the baptism of infants, that as it was under the Mosaic dispensation with regard to Profelytes, so it appears quite reasonable under the Christian, that when any nation or people are address'd to, that have not had the gospel, they should first be convinced of the truth of it, before we offer to baptize either them or their children ; for it would be monstrously absurd, to apply a *rite* that should distinguish them from infidels, or which asserts their childrens right to the privileges and benefits of the christian covenant, when they profess'd no belief in the christian doctrine, and most probably would continue in their Paganism, or Judaism, or Mahometanism, and educate their children in the same principles of infidelity. But then this we apprehend does no way invalidate or weaken the claim of christian infants, since they are as capable of receiving the sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, as *Abraham's* infants were ; and the faith of a christian parent, *nay*, his openly professing the christian religion, must give his *infant-offspring* a claim to the external, initiating rite of the covenant ;— by the rule of *analogy*, as well as that of all sober reasoning, we may fairly conclude, that the original commission was never intended to exclude infants. The *order of the words* will not make this a determined point, or bring the argument

gument to any issue; for if none must be baptized, but what are first taught, because teaching is put before baptizing, then forasmuch as children or infants are not capable of *believing*, therefore *all* of them, that die before they are believers, must be damned; for so says the *letter* of the text very expressly, *Mark* xvi. 16. *Nay*, it is the original commission St. *Mark* says our Lord gave his disciples, which they were to deliver in these words,—*He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*—But certainly infants were not intended to be excluded *salvation*, or *mercy*, or *life* here, on account of their being incapable of believing, any more than they were intended to be excluded the initiating, baptismal rite in the other place, on account of their incapacity of being discipled along with their parents. But this defence may appear more fully under our considering another sort of objection, *viz.*

Obj. III. THERE is express mention made in the New Testament of adult persons being baptized, but there is an *entire silence* with regard to the baptismation of infants; since therefore there is neither precept nor precedent in this case, it will follow, that to baptize infants, is to be wise above what is written, or it is to innovate upon the christian plan,

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LET it be considered, that this objection will absolutely lose its force in the mouth or from the pen of an *adult-baptizer*; inasmuch as the same high charge lies full against *adult-baptism*, as practised at this day among us: for I may with freedom assert, that there is neither *precept* nor *precedent*, in all the New Testament, for christians bringing up or educating their children till of mature age, before they baptize them. So that to do thus, is to be manifestly wise above what is written, and to innovate upon the christian plan.

Besides, there does not seem to be a defence capable of being made for such conduct. Are not such chargeable with *altering* and *changing* the nature and design of the rite? and instead of making it or using it in its original intention, *viz.* as *initiatory*, they use it as *confirmatory*, applying it only to such whom they apprehend to be fixed, resolved and determined christians;—whereas the *rite*, as used by the apostles, will warrant no such conduct: for as soon as men declared, that they believed the christian doctrine, they were immediately baptized. An open and voluntary profession entitled the man, who but a *few hours* before was an idolatrous pagan, or an infidel, obstinate Jew. Nay, nor was the baptism of an *Evangelist* ever deemed invalid, tho' applied to a *sorcerer*, whose heart was not right with God, *Acts* viii, 13 and 21 *ver.* compared. It is indeed said, that *Simon himself also believed*; but what his faith was, may be learnt from the Spirit

Spirit he afterwards express'd, who only wanted to make a penny of the miraculous impartments. And yet, tho' he had no better views, but was in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity, yet he is expressly said, by *St. Luke* the historian, *to BELIEVE*. And his baptism, as to the propriety or validity of it, is never once called in question, which, if it had been faulty in *Philip*, we might have expected, that *Peter* and *John* would have reprov'd him, and given him some cautionary rules to prevent his misapplying the *christian rite* for the future;—but there is nothing like it. So that we may fairly conclude, that by a *bare profession* of believing, men were entitled to baptism in the sense of the apostles.

We therefore humbly demand of *adult-baptizers*, that they will be pleased to give us some clear and determinate rule, by which we may judge when a child of common sense, or of an ordinary genius, becomes as capable of baptism as *Simon Magus*, and other *such believers*, who had base and low ends in professing to believe the christian doctrine. And after this, these Gentlemen should shew, that the *conditions* which they require, as pre-requisites to baptism, are not *above* the size of the apostolical standard.—Probably it may turn out, that the *adult-baptizers* act upon no other authority, than their own imagination; and that they have made *moral* temper and character requisite to qualify for baptism, when the Scriptures only authorize us to understand the commission for
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baptizing grown persons, to take place upon an *explicite declaration*, that they gave credit to the christian doctrine, whether in reality they did so, or not?—What else were the *carnal*, the *envious*, the *factious Corinthians*, whom PAUL thanks God he had not baptized, only *Crispus* and *Gaius*, and the household of *Stephanas*; what were these? 1 Cor. iii. begin. will inform you. They were but *mere babes*, they had no true notion, at all, of the design of christianity; and therefore St. Paul could not speak to them, as unto *spiritual*, as to men of virtuous temper and character, but as unto *carnal*; at best, to such as knew no more of christianity, than a baptized infant;—and yet, these could boast of their *heads*, or those who baptized them, and imagin'd such to be their spiritual fathers!—

If then the New Testament authority is good with respect to the qualification for baptism, viz. that *no more* was requisite to found the claim upon, than a grown person's openly professing, that he believed that Jesus was the Messiah, tho' he was a vicious, wicked, immoral man; it follows, that to insist upon moral temper and virtuous behaviour, as the pre-requisite to baptism, is to go beyond, nay, to go without the *rule*, and to be wise above what is written. And if it should appear, that they, i. e. the *adult-baptizers*, have no settled measure, nor any exact standard, by which to judge of the *degree of qualification*, the charge in the objection, laid against infant-baptism,

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run high against *adult-baptizers* themselves. But there are *numbers* among the anti-pædo-baptists, who have long profess'd the christian religion, as well as *many* judicious, sober, hopeful Youth, who have long since exceeded the qualification requisite to baptism in the apostolick age, and yet are *unbaptized*.

By the way, I would remark, that the adult-baptizers are not the only sect of christians, that *innovate*, or act in this case, without any authority from Scripture ; for there are many among the other denominations of *Protestant-Dissenters*, who will not baptize the child of a professing christian, because, in their sense, he is not a *church-member* : nay, if I mistake not, some insist upon *both* parents being church-members, *i. e.* such as communicate with them at the *Lord's-supper*.—But, by what authority these congregations have settled and establish'd such pre-requisites to baptism, it behoves them to declare, that men may be able to judge, whether they are in these respects for *Bible-religion*, or for *Protestant Popery*.—

To go on ; *adult-baptizers* do appear to have neither *precept* nor *precedent* in Scripture to support their practice ; and instead of charging *infant-baptizers* with innovating, they ought first to clear their own character, or vindicate their own practice ; and to shew, that they do not *postpone* the application of the baptismal rite—that they do not pervert the design of it, by making it a *confirming*, rather than an *initiating* ordinance.

Farther, as to the other part of the objection, there does not seem to be such a *profound silence*, in the New Testament, about the baptism of infants, as is here supposed, or asserted; for there are no less than *three households* mention'd that were baptized, *viz.* that of *Stephanas*, of *Lydia*, and of the *Jayler*. And it is observable of *Lydia*, that she pleads thus with the apostle and his company; *if ye have judg'd me to be faithful, come into my house and abide*, Acts xvi. 15. She does not say, if ye have judg'd me and my house to have been faithful, or to be believers, come and abide with me.—She probably had children who were baptized, in virtue of her embracing the christian doctrine. Her *household*, of whatever it consisted, appears to have been baptized in virtue of her faith; and, for my part, I can see no reason why it should not have entitl'd her *children*, as well as her *household servants* or *vassals*, to baptism. It is certain there is no mention made of the *faith* of her household; but only of her *own* faith. And the probability seems *greater*, that they did not express any faith in the christian doctrine, than that there were no children in her household. It is particularly and expressly said of *Lydia* herself, *that her heart was opened*, and that *she attended to the things spoken of Paul*; but not one word of her household's *hearts being opened*, or of *their attending to the words of Paul*, or of *their being faithful*.—And is it not an odd sort of a declaration made to the *Jayler*, by *Paul* and *Silas*, *viz. that if he him-*
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self believed, he should be saved and all his house, if his house was not entitled to baptism upon his embracing the christian doctrine? *Acts xvi. 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*—

IT is no objection, that in *ver. 34.* he is said to rejoice, *believing in God, with all his house*: forasmuch as it is no way improper to use this language concerning him and his house, tho' some of his house were young children—*moreover*, it will be an argument of great *credulity* in us, should we conclude from this account, that on the *Jayler's* and on *Lydia's* believing, all *theirs* was so influenced by their *faith*, as instantly to believe also!—*On the contrary*, these households appear to be consider'd and treated as entitled to baptism, merely from the *faith* of their heads.—And this seems to be the *Scripture Doctrine of Baptism*, viz. that the faith of a *parent* or *master* convert, entitled not only himself, but all that belonged to him, to baptism.—Hereupon, I would ask this fair question,—was there ever a greater *analogy* shewn to subsist between two things, than between the apostolick practice of admitting christian converts, with their households, into the christian covenant by baptism; and the manner of God's covenanting with *Abraham*, and ordering the rite of circumcision to be applied? both the household of *Abraham*, and those of the Proselytes of the covenant, were circumcised, and admitted upon the faith of their *parent*, *master*, or *head*; and so are the households

of christian converts.—Surely an unprejudiced mind will now own, that there is not an *entire silence* in the New Testament about infant-baptism.

HERE we find also the difficulty vanishing about the *right* of infants to baptism, *i. e.* of those infants, whose parents have embraced the christian doctrine; since it is plain, that *Abraham's* faith entitled his children, nay his whole male household, to the *seal* of the covenant, the seal of the righteousness of his faith: correspondent to which, *Lydia* and the *Jayler* are declared to have their households entitled to baptism, upon their embracing the christian doctrine themselves: so that it follows, the *right* which infants have to baptism, is invested in the faith of their believing parent, according to that famous declaration of *St. Paul's* already taken notice of, *1 Cor. vii. 14. The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband: else were your children unclean; or to be treated as the children of the Gentiles, whose laws determine them to be illegitimate, if both the parents were not citizens; and so disabled from the privileges and benefits of their municipal laws and constitutions;—but as the case stands, now they are holy, or may be treated, as entitled to the privileges and benefits of the christian constitution or kingdom.—Thus we see, that the silence is not so very profound with regard to infant-baptism; but one may understand the* New

New Testament to be giving some very plain hints about it.

Obj. IV. BUT it is yet objected, that baptism is of very considerable importance in the affair of mens salvation, as it is recommended in the writings of the New Testament; *he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16. And that expression of *Paul and Silas* to the *Jayler*, *Acts* xvi. 31. *Believe,—and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*; upon which he and his house were *baptized*. And the *Jews* were exhorted by *Peter* to repent, and be *baptized*, every one of them for the *remission of sins*, *Acts* ii. 38. And hence *baptism*, supposed of importance in the affair of a man's salvation, cannot be applied with any propriety to an infant, which is incapable of understanding any thing about it.

LET it be granted, that baptism is a standing *rite*, by which men and their offspring are initiated into the church of Christ; and that all men, who understand it in this light, are oblig'd to conform to it in this sense, as it is the subject of a *positive* command of Jesus. It does not hence follow, that it is the duty of others to submit to baptism, if upon an unprejudiced, honest examination and enquiry, they cannot discern, that the *rite* is yet in force. He must
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be a very *bigot*, who can lay such stress on any *positive rite*, as to imagine, that the neglect of it in those, who discern not its weight and moment, after a careful endeavour to know the mind of Jesus, will prejudice their final acceptance.—And happy is it for the *adult-baptizers*, that baptism is not essential to salvation; for were it so, what would become of numbers of their children whom they have educated, till they have arrived at a moral capacity and character, and yet have died unbaptized? It is worthy observation, that baptism is dropped, and not one word said about it, when *mens damnation* is mention'd. He that believes not, that is, who is not faithful and sincere, shall be damned.

THAT passage of our Lord's to *Nicodemus* may have something emphatical in it. *John* iii. 5. *Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*—This, the cowardly *Nicodemus*, who was under the influence of a slavish fear of men, was to consider, as the *necessary qualification* for his being a real disciple and follower of Jesus; he could not be looked upon as a subject of his kingdom, whilst he was afraid of making an open profession of his faith in Jesus.—It is not, that there is any virtue in baptism to *save*, either infant or adult person; nor can it go farther in its *cleansing* power, than the taking away the filth of the flesh, 1 *Pet.* iii. 21. But nevertheless it is a *rite*, an initiating rite, to the benefits and privileges of that covenant, which had
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the promises of eternal life. So men were baptized into the doctrine of remission, as they were thereby enter'd and own'd as parties in the christian covenant ; to whom the promises would belong, if they conform'd to the Spirit of it. But this will by no means prove, that all the *first converts*, who were admitted to baptism, were finally saved.—Professing the christian religion, and being baptized, were the qualifications for partaking of the light and aid of the Gospel, and of obtaining salvation by Jesus Christ, upon a proper use of such light and aid ; but neither baptism, nor a profession of the christian religion, ever did, or will, entitle any man to salvation, who attains not to the Temper and Spirit of the Gospel.

BUT if by those expressions, *If thou believest, and art baptized, thou shalt be saved*, or, *if thou believest, thou shalt be saved, with all thine house*, we must understand, that the gift of *eternal, happy life*, shall be thereby *secured* to a man, and to his house : this would suppose the doctrine of *imputed faith* to have a surprising operation !—But surely the apostles intended no more, when they spoke thus to the *Jayler*, and to *others*, than that they and theirs should have the *means* of eternal happiness put into their hands ; and they and theirs should be admitted and acknowledged by them, as members of Christ's church and kingdom.

THE settling of this point must have great weight in the doctrine of baptism. I would therefore, in order to shew, that by *he that believeth*,

believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he, and his household, can intend no more, than his having the great mean of mercy, the Gospel aid, that brings salvation, put into his hand, and into the hands of his; for his believing, and being baptized, was not sufficient to secure his own final acceptance.—Besides, Christ had himself many disciples, who apostatized, John vi. 66. And he declares, that in the day of retribution, in that day, Many will say to him, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils! and in thy name have done many wonderful works! To whom he will profess, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity, Matth. vii. 22, 23. So that many that have believed, i. e. profess'd to believe the christian doctrine; nay, I doubt not, many who have really assented to the truth of it, and have been baptized, shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, when understood of the kingdom of glory. It therefore follows, as a clear case, that when the apostles thus express themselves, or our Lord thus expresses himself, that he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; or, if thou believest, thou shalt be saved, and thine house; must not be understood, that eternal life stood infallibly connected and secured by such faith and baptism; but only that salvation, i. e. the highest means of salvation, would be put into their hands. Hereupon we find the apostles so frequently describing sincere, constant and assiduous endeavour; great labour; patient continuance

ance in well-doing; acts of self-denial and mortification; and contempt of the world, as standing in connection with glory, honour, immortality, and with security of eternal life.—

OUR blessed Lord commands his disciples, such as believed on him, and were baptized, to *strive*, to strive with the greatest earnestness to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in, i. e. by methods which do not imply due application, and a becoming earnestness, but shall not be able, Luke xiii. 24.—So that men may believe the Gospel, and be baptized, and yet not be finally saved. They have indeed the most apt means of salvation, by embracing the Gospel, but that itself will not operate as a charm; its being in the head, without duly affecting the heart, and influencing the life, will only leave the man eternally speechless, and without any plea in arrest of judgment, when the sentence comes forth, *Depart from me.*—

THUS it is evident, that baptism is of no farther importance in the affair of mens salvation, than as it is the external, initiatory rite, by which they are acknowledged as the subjects of Christ's visible kingdom, and entitled to the benefits of it; and of this rite, so understood, infants of christians are capable, nay, they are the proper subjects of it.—

Farther, Infants, which are baptized by us, we own to be *incapable* of any thought or understanding about what is applied to them; yet let none venture to *ridicule* the practice on
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this account; for they will find that our Lord did himself use a *baptismal rite* to grown persons, and laid so much stress upon his doing it, that he told one of them, that unless he submitted to it, *he had no part in him*. And yet this very person, whom he was to so wash, or baptize, knew nothing, no more than an infant, of the *moral* intention or design of the baptism, see *John* xiii. 7, 8. Jesus says to Peter, *what I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter*. Peter says, *thou shalt never wash my feet*. Jesus answered him, *if I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me*.—Let such, who throw contempt on the baptism of infants, because they are *not capable* of understanding the intention of it, beware, lest they do not, by such conduct, reflect on the *wisdom* of Jesus; who, in the instance just mention'd, has, as it were, rebuked such contempt, and stopped the mouth of the objector.

BUT perhaps infants may be better qualified for baptism, than the objection supposes; for the *Anti-pædobaptists* have sometimes put the baptism of our Lord, by *John* in *Jordan*, *Matth.* iii. 13.—as a *precedent* for adult-baptism. The contrary to which appears to me, to be the truth of the case; for tho' his being baptized of him *before* he enter'd upon his publick ministry; may intimate this as his pleasure, *viz.* that baptism by water should initiate *all* into his kingdom;—yet if the conditions of baptism contended for in adult persons be attended to, *viz.* *repentance towards God, and*
faith

faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; every one at first sight will perceive, that our Lord was capable of neither; he had no sin to repent of, and it is not to be said, with any propriety, that he could or should *believe* in himself, as the condition of his baptism. So that in these very material respects, if our Lord was a *precedent* for water-baptism, infants are only capable of resembling him herein; for they are innocent, and free from guilt or guile.——

Obj. V. LET it be objected, that if children are *pure, innocent and holy*, then they have no need of washing; and baptism must therefore be very impertinently applied to them.——

You see that here the precedent of our Lord's baptism flies in the face of such objection;—besides, there must be *something* taken for granted to rest the objection upon, or it will have no manner of foundation; and that *something*, I am of opinion, must be this, *viz.* that the *baptismal water* has, in a *moral* sense, a *cleansing* efficacy or virtue: or, that in the language of some, it can *renovate, regenerate, and change* the very nature of the subject. But this is denied, as it is impossible from the very nature of the thing; for how should that, which at most, when applied, can only wash away the filth of the flesh; how should this *cleanse, purge, or purify* the conscience? It cannot have this effect on grown persons,—which is confess'd by

the *practice* of *adult-baptizers*, which is professedly upon the principle of the subjects of baptism being *believers*, and such as are truly penitent and pious; and of consequence, they may be looked upon as *holy* or *sanctified*, before the application of water takes place. So that the same objection would lie against their *need* of washing, that lies against infants need of sprinkling; the *one* being actually purified and cleansed, the *other* truly harmless and innocent: and upon this principle, neither the one nor the other should be baptized;—it being quite superfluous to apply water to cleanse that which is already clean. And were it not so, water has no such deterfitive quality, as would reach the inward pollution.—

Besides, it never was esteemed to have the place of an objection, *viz.* infants being the natural branches of an *holy root*. On the contrary, it was their being so, from *Abraham* down to *Christ*, that gave them the title to the sign or seal of the covenant;—and that made it proper to apply baptism to *Profelytes* and their offspring, as marks of their being distinguished from idolaters; in which impure state, they had been before *Profelytism*. And the rite being applied to the *infant-offspring* of *Christians*, plainly asserts their being acknowledged holy, or as having a *right*, in virtue of the faith of their parents, to the privileges and benefits of the christian covenant.

Obj. VI. It is objected, from another party of christians, that to represent children as pure and innocent, is to falsify or deny *the truth*; for they are all born in *original sin*, and are all by nature children of wrath; and therefore *baptism* should be applied to them, as the *laver of regeneration*. That *baptism* hereupon must have a regenerating efficacy; the water being sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin, as well as its being a *rite*, by which the infant is incorporated into the body of Christ's church.

WHAT foundation there is for this hypothesis, I cannot see in the revelation. The doctrine of imputed *demerit* or *guilt*, appears to me to be contrary to all first principles of truth or equity. And the doctrine of what is called *original sin*, has been sufficiently exploded by many judicious writers; and of late, it has been treated with great judgment and ingenuity by the Reverend Mr. *John Taylor* of *Norwich*, in his *Scripture Doctrine* and *Appendix*. Which performances seem to have been as fatal to this enormous *Goliath*, as the stones from *David's* sling were to the *Philistine* giant.—To these writings I would humbly refer the objectors to the innocency of infants; and shall add, that no such gloomy, no such horrid idea should be indulged by a disciple of Jesus, as to imagine his offspring, his infant-offspring, the ob-
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jects of God's wrath, or chargeable with any guilt or demerit.—To talk of the *fathers having eaten sowre grapes, and the childrens teeth being set on an edge*, is a proverb only to be expected from the mouth of a perverse, way-ward, provoking people, that dared to charge God's ways *with being unequal!*—And nothing less than an apprehension of having committed the most atrocious acts of villainy and wickedness, could have justified such an expression in the mouth of David, viz. *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me:*—for, let but David contemplate himself, at a time when he is not under the sense of such departures from God, and he will describe his formation in a much more just and becoming manner; even as the subject of his praise, and not of his self-abhorrence:—*I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well*, Ps. cxxxix. 14.

AND how does Job emphatically plead the divine regards and tenderneſſes towards him, from his being God's workmanship? *ch. x. 3. Is it good to thee,—that thou shouldst despise the work or labour of thine hands?*—and ver. 8. *Thine hands have made me, took pains about me, accurately wrought me, discovered great skill in my formation;—thou hast fashioned me round about.* So exquisitely curious is the whole of my frame, that there is not a part but what is a real subject of wonder and amazement.—

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And wilt thou yet destroy me? Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me.—

THUS evident is it, that infants are so far from being the children of wrath, or the objects of God's displeasure, that they are his workmanship;—his, whose productions are always worthy of himself; his, whose *tender mercies* are over *all* his works.—They cannot by any means have offended him, for they have no power or capacity, no organ, no faculty, no appetite, but what he has placed in them; and they have not been able to express immoral or vicious temper and conduct.—*Moreover*, was it possible that God could look upon them as sinners, and as the subjects of his wrath, it must convey no very honourable idea of him, to suppose, that he should appoint an external *rite*, that, like an incantation or charm, should remove their obnoxiousness, and conciliate or appease his wrath towards them? This implies indeed an *imputation* of great virtue and efficacy to the water, and may do well enough as the antagonistical or repellent charm, to that of imputed sin;—for it cannot operate by any known law of reason or mechanism, in regenerating, or in renovating the nature of the infant's soul. So that unless the imputed *original sin* be something very superficial, the external application of water can never remove the turpitude.—

Obj. VII. BUT truly Mr. *Barclay* would take from us every Text that mentions Water-Baptism;

Baptism;—but how consistently with the *apostolical practice* already taken notice of, it behoves those to shew, who avow his principles. The *odd* manner in which he has explained away *Texts*, may be seen by any who consult his *Apology*. I shall, as a specimen, take notice of one, and that is, 1 *Pet.* iii. 21. *The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*—His comment is as follows:

“ So plain a definition of *baptism* is not in
 “ all the Bible; and therefore seeing it is
 “ so plain, it may well be preferred to
 “ all the coined definitions of the school-
 “ men. The apostle tells us, first *nega-*
 “ *tively*, what it is not, *viz. not a put-*
 “ *ting away the filth of the flesh*; then
 “ surely it is not a washing with water,
 “ since that is so. Secondly, he tells us
 “ *affirmatively*, what it is, *viz. the an-*
 “ *swer of a good conscience towards God,*
 “ *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*; where he affirmatively defines it to be
 “ *the answer* (or *confession*, as the *Syriack*
 “ *version* hath it) of a *good conscience*. Now
 “ this answer cannot be, but where the
 “ Spirit of God hath purified the soul,
 “ and the fire of his judgment hath burn-
 “ ed up the *unrighteous nature*.”—“ *More-*
 “ *over*, the apostle in this place does seem
 “ especially

“ especially to guard against those, that
 “ might esteem *Water-Baptism* the true
 “ baptism of Christ,” (from the comparison introduced by him in the preceding verse;) “ to prevent such mistake, he
 “ plainly affirms, that it is not that, but
 “ another thing ;——*that it is not the putting away.*——Moreover, *Peter* calls
 “ this here, which saves, the *ἀντίτυπον*, the
 “ antitype, or the thing figured.”——
Apol. p. 419, 420.

THE stress of his argument lies in this, *viz.* that because baptism, the antitype, does not save by washing away the filth of the flesh, but baptism does save by the answer or confession of a good conscience towards God; therefore the apostle could not intend, but must exclude Water-Baptism.——This seems to be too sophistical; for the apostle *Paul* says, *that in Christ Jesus there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision*, Col. iii. 11. But will mens embracing the christian doctrine, some circumcised, and some uncircumcised, render them neither circumcised nor uncircumcised?—He asserts also, *that there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ*, Gal. iii. 28. But will this prove, that there remains no distinction of sex, when persons become christians?—Nay, he asserts likewise, *Gal. vi. 15. that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* But because neither the one, nor the other availeth,
 —G— does

does it therefore follow, that a man's becoming a new creature, will leave him neither circumcised nor uncircumcised?—This would be esteemed a mere Jesuitical comment, and would want the *bocus pocus* of infallible authority to reconcile it to our *assent* or approbation.—And why should we give in to such a conclusion from the *apologist*?—The apostle had been mentioning *water*, *destructive* water, from which, *NOAH had been saved in the ark*. The *antitype* whereunto *baptism* does even now save us;—the *repercussion* or *reflection* that water now makes, has a *saving* aspect; and so is the proper *antitype* to water, when viewed in its destructive form. Nevertheless, it does not save us by the putting away of the filth of the flesh.—Nor do we contend for any moral virtue, or efficacy in the baptismal water: it is no where the doctrine of the New Testament.—But we agree with St. *Peter*, that baptism, the *antitype* to the destructive deluge, from ¹ which *Noah* and his family were saved, can do no more than wash away the filth of the flesh: and that the answer of a good conscience will be requisite to our partaking of the benefits of Christ's resurrection and exaltation. But then this by no means proves, that *Water-Baptism* is here excluded; without water, you have nothing to stand as the *antitype* to the watry deluge. And it is not to be conceiv'd, that St. *Peter* should intend to exclude *Water-Baptism*, when

¹ So I imagine the particle *δια* should be render'd, 1 Cor. iii. 15. saved, so as from fire.—

when he would not suffer men to go without it, who had already received the *Holy Spirit*, *Acts* x. 47, 48.—he commanded even them to be baptized.—

Besides, we have laid down this as a most general moral view of *Water-Baptism*, namely, that it should signify personal purity; and that this is the *demand* of the *rite* upon all such as would conform to the intention of it: just as circumcision, and the baptism of Profelytes had been, under former dispensations. So *St. Peter* uses a word, which signifies the DEMAND of the *christian rite*, viz. that men should be holy. And this is the proper sense of the word, *ἐπισημα*, render'd *the answer*. It is the very language of the *rite* to demand personal purity; which *baptized persons* must endeavour after according to their capacities, or the *rite* will signify nothing to them, or *something* worse than nothing.—

Obj. VIII. *St. Paul* has declared the impropriety of *Water-Baptism*, when he said, *I thank God, I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius*,—*1 Cor.* i. 14. *And that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel*: for altho' *Water-Baptists* interpret *ver.* 17. as signifying, that *St. Paul* was not principally sent to baptize; yet this exposition, we are told, is to be rejected as spurious; for, *he was not sent to baptize*^m.

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^m See Barclay's *Apol.* p. 429. *Edit.* vi.

IT would be a sufficient refutation of Mr. Barclay's reasoning, should we only reply, that if St. *Paul* was not sent to baptize *at all*, he thus by *baptizing* acted beyond his commission; and should have made it the matter of his *humiliation* before God, and of his *penitency* before the *Corinthians*, *namely*, that he had knowingly and wilfully acted contrary to or perverted the design of his commission in *three* several instances among them.—And he might, no doubt, have had matter enough for *confession*, from what he had done elsewhere in his apostolic journeys.—But there is not any thing more evident, than the reason why *Paul* thanks God he had baptized so few among them, *namely*, his seeing that they made such a perverse use of their baptism (as has been before observ'd)—they made their *baptizers* their *spiritual fathers*, and set them up as the patrons of their faith! and hereby were splitting and rending the church into parties, and opposite, jarring sects and factions.—

IT is no manner of proof, that *Water-Baptism* don't belong to the appointments of Jesus, that *Paul* is thankful he had no party among the *Corinthians*, that could tumultuously cabal, and insult over others, on account of his having baptized them.—*Besides*, at the same time when it intimates to us, that preaching the Gospel was more properly the work of an apostle, it admits of baptizing to be very consistent with the apostolic character, since he owns, that he had baptized several persons among them.

THE spirituality of the christian dispensation does not, in the least, render baptism improper, since our Lord himself submitted to it. And the first christians, who had received the *impartments* of the Spirit in the highest or most extraordinary sense, were able to speak with tongues, and heard to magnify God, *Acts* x. 46. were upon this account looked upon as undeniably fit to receive Water-Baptism, *ver.* 47. So the reasoning of Mr. *Barclay* seems to have mistook the New Testament doctrine concerning Water-Baptism. Had he been present, with his own sentiments about him, he would not have said, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we; or as St. Peter, have commanded them to be baptized;*—but he would have said, *these have already the baptism of the Spirit, the only baptism of Jesus; and they need no water, nor shall they have any.*—Thus opposite were the sentiments of St. Peter, and of this *Apologist*.

Obj. IX. BUT perhaps *Gal.* iii. 28. may be objected, *viz. that there is neither MALE nor FEMALE, but all are one in Christ Jesus;*—and more especially *Col.* iii. 11. *that there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision;* and *Rom.* ii. 28, 29. *for he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in*
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*the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God;—*which supposes, that the spirituality of the christian dispensation will admit of no positive, external rites.

I freely own, that the passage in *Galatians*, and that in the *Colossians*, do appear to belong to the christian, *baptismal rite*, *i. e.* that both passages appear to be of the same import, and to have a reference to the *rite* being applicable to *both sexes*; which had not been the case under the *Abrahamic* covenant and Jewish polity; for their *initiating rite* was applicable only to the males.

WHY I reckon that passage in the *Colossians* to be of the same import, is, that the apostle has the very same point in view in both places, *viz.* shewing the advantage of the christian institution, as prior to that of the Mosaic. Besides, he would be guilty of a *tautology*, should he be so understood, as to intend *Jew* and *Gentile*, by *circumcision* and *uncircumcision* here; for he had just used the terms, neither *Greek* nor *Jew*; and lest the word *Greek* should be understood as an appellative, only proper to the *Græcian* people, he subjoins *Barbarian*, *Scythian*, bond or free.

HIS declaring then, that *there is neither male nor female*, must refer to the distinction made among the Jews, by that initiating rite *circumcision*; and in any other sense I cannot find it intelligible. For,

IN the ceremonial lustrations or purifications of infants, of both sexes, there was no difference under the law; the *females* being treated in the same manner as the *males* were treated, as to the burnt-offering, or the offering of atonement before the Lord, see *Lev. xii. 6, 7, 8.*—They were likewise esteemed *equally* holy with the males, as there was the same limitations prescrib'd to each in their laws about marriage, *Deut. vii. 3.*—*Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.*—

AND there was the same law against the prostitution of a daughter, as there was against the prostitution of a son, to idolatry or incantations, *Deut. xviii. 10.*—*Nay, the very female slaves or vassals, might not be sold to a strange nation, tho' her master had dealt deceitfully with her, Exod. xxi. 7,—12.*

BESIDES, they did eat the passover, as well as the males, in every family; and altho' they were not equally enjoin'd to attend yearly the three great feasts at *Jerusalem*, with the males, (their various confinements, not always, or very seldom admitting of it) yet they did attend the feast of the passover at *Jerusalem*, as we find by *St. Luke's* account, *i. e.* when they had ability or opportunity, *Luke ii. 41, 42.*

MOREOVER, the Jewish females, both women and children, are *express parties* in the Jewish covenant, as may be proved from many places; among which consult, *Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. Josh. viii. 35.*

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SINCE therefore we can find no other mark of distinction made between the males and females among the Jews, only that of the initiating rite of circumcision, we may fairly conclude, that the *removal of this distinction* is intended by the apostle, when he says, that in Christ Jesus, or under the christian dispensation, there is neither male nor female,² circumcision nor uncircumcision; for in fact, unless we so apply it, it is false; forasmuch as, literally speaking, there must be both male and female, and there cannot but be either circumcision or uncircumcision.

“BUT the objection would suppose, that such is the spirituality of the christian dispensation, that no *rite* whatsoever is required; and that the apostle intended to intimate as much, in the above passages, cited in the objection.”——

BUT that could not be his meaning; since that *last Text*, in *Rom. ii.* says as strong things of the *Jewish rite*, it not determining him a *Jew*, or an *holy person* before God, or a *real child of Abraham*; but, he was to have the *circumcision of the heart*, to answer to the external circumcision, otherwise he would find it of *no avail* to him; or, in the language of *St. Peter*, he must have *the answer of a good conscience towards God*;—but then, it by no means determin'd it *unnecessary* for a Jew, consider'd as such, and whilst under that constitution, that he should be circumcised; for this was his indispensable duty, altho' it was not sufficient to recom-

recommend him to God without a correspondency of moral, virtuous temper and conduct. And it is the same as to the *christian rite*; but then by *analogy* it does not follow, that because *baptismal water* can only wash away the filth of the flesh, and that the *saving* qualification, is the *answer* of a good conscience towards God, that therefore, we are not to be baptized;—for without *water*, a good conscience has no symbol of purity to which it answers. And consequently, in the language of *St. Peter*, *baptism* is not superseded by the spirituality of the christian dispensation.

WE might farther remark, that tho' the *moral temper* of the Jew was to answer the *outward rite* of circumcision, yet he had the *rite* applied in his infancy;—so that it stood as *far off* from the circumcision of the heart, in the Spirit, *with regard to time*, as the answer of a good conscience does from the application of baptismal water to an infant. So that baptism is fitly applied to an infant, notwithstanding the spirituality of the christian dispensation.

AND methinks there is something very natural in extending the application of baptism to its proper compass, *i. e.* so as to include infants, when we compare with this *one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all*, Eph. iv. 5, 6.—

Obj. X. IT may be objected by men, who are for rejecting revelation, and being absolutely guided by the light of nature, that

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to talk of the use of the external rite of *baptism*, in a religious sense, is inconsistent with the pure documents of reason, or the light of nature.

It is confess'd, that this objection would have had some weight, if these *rites* had been represented as *in themselves* qualifying for the divine acceptance; but this is denied. Men may be baptized either in adult years, or in infancy, and in neither the one, or other age, receive any the least benefit from it, by neglecting to use aright and improve the benefits which it is the external sign or seal of their being initiated into;—so men may eat and drink in Christ's name, and in remembrance of his death, and yet become no way influenced by the *design* of it, which was to redeem men from all iniquity. But what of all this? it does not hence follow, that there is no aptitude in the one or in the other, to become the means of mens becoming more reasonable, or spiritual and holy.

NOR let an advocate for the religion of nature triumph here over revealed religion, the religion of Jesus; for, notwithstanding the light of nature carefully attended to, would not furnish a man with any one religious *rite* that is merely positive (this being absurd in its own nature; forasmuch as what arises from the light of nature, as the dictate of pure reason and fitness, must have something intrinsically moral in it,) yet men, under no other guidance than their own reasonings, and the conversation and
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reflections of those about them, I mean, men destitute of an express revelation, have usually run, if not always, into *numberless* rites, and a *multiplicity* of idle and insignificant ceremonies.—Nor can any religion in the world boast of that simplicity which the christian can,—as any man must own, who forms his ideas of it from the New Testament, and from thence only.—Altho' there are some churches, which call themselves *christian*, that can vie with the most superstitious and idolatrous pagans, in superstition and idolatry.

Obj. XI. BUT it is again said, that tho' baptism might possibly become a *moral mean* to an adult person, yet we see not how it can affect an infant; for supposing it to die in infancy without baptism, it is a mere jest to imagine, that it will be worse treated by the universal Father, than if it had been baptized: for the omission of it was no matter of blame in the infant.

WE grant, that in the case of an infant dying unbaptized, there is neither *reason* nor *scripture* that will give us any foundation to suppose, that God will treat it the worse, for not having been baptized, since it was no way blameable for the omission. But it does not hence follow, that the parent of such infant would be blameless; for if he saw that God had ever demanded, that the infants of believers should have the same *rite* applied to them, that had been ap-

plied to their parents, and that the faith of the parent, or his professing the christian doctrine, entitled his infant-offspring to baptism, he would act an unchristian part, to refuse to have his child baptized.—

Again, It is not pretended, that baptism has any moral virtue or efficacy in it, but that it ascertains the right of the child or grown person to the PRIVILEGES of the christian covenant, *i. e.* consider'd as moral means ;—but it does not hence follow, that an infant would *fare the worse* in the hands of its Maker, for not having had this its *right* asserted, or sealed by baptism.—But the parent must be greatly guilty or criminal, if he saw, that it was the will of his Lord and Master, that infants should be thus acknowledged, as taken within the enclosures of infinite love and goodness, and yet neglected. The kingdom of God in Jesus, is certainly as condescending and compassionate, as the kingdom of God had ever been under *former* dispensations ; and this kingdom had always embraced infants, by the *very same rite* that their parents were admitted : and why should not we then conclude, that the infants of believing or professing christians must have a claim to the *initiating rite* of his kingdom ? But inasmuch as a *rite of initiation* has ever been thought proper to *distinguish* the people of God and their offspring, from idolaters and their offspring, *baptism* will be in force among christians while the world stands ; unless the whole habitable earth should become the kingdoms of the Lord
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and of his Christ, and there should be but *one* name, and *one* worship throughout the habitable world.

BUT it is time to consider some other ENCOURAGEMENTS, which christian parents have, thus to dedicate and devote their infant-offspring to God;—and,

I. THE kind expressions which the author of our religion shewed to infants, recommends the parental *Storge*ⁿ towards our offspring; and is a most engaging view of his government.—It should endear his name to all men, in that he is become not only our head and Lord, but he is also become the *Guardian* of our infants, and their lives and interests are under his care and notice. So that we may understand him as saying to a christian parent, when dying, *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve alive, and let thy widows trust in me.*—Besides,

OUR blessed Lord openly and affectionately declared of *infants*, that such was their simplicity and purity, that they were a standard of the qualification of grown persons entring and becoming the subjects of his kingdom. *Matth. xviii. 2, 3. And Jesus called a little child to him, and set him in the midst of them, i. e. of his disciples, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again, ch. xix. 13, 14. Suffer little children, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

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ⁿ *That instinct of nature, implanted in us for the preservation of our offspring.*

THE admirers of Jesus, had many of them express'd a just and natural fondness for their children; and they (thinking Christ to be, what he really was, a prophet mighty in deed and word) *wanted his blessing on their infants.*—To this purpose they brought them to him, *that he might lay his hands upon them.* His disciples indeed rebuked them, weakly thinking, their infants *not capable subjects of Christ's blessing*;—but Jesus, so far from rebuking, encourages the temper of their parents, and complies with their request.—Mark tells us, *ch. x. 14, 16.* that he said, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God*;—and these young children, *he took up in his arms, he put his hands upon them, he blessed them.*—And Luke says, *ch. xviii. 15.* *that they brought unto him infants also*: or, as it may be render'd, *even infants*, (*καὶ τὰ βρέφη.*) So the *copulative* render'd *also* is used, *1 Cor. xv. 24. Rom. viii. 23. 2 Cor. i. 3. Jam. iii. 9.*—And *even of infants*, or concerning them, he gives this charge, *viz. that his disciples should suffer these LITTLE CHILDREN to come to him, and not forbid them*, see ver. 16. of that 18th of Luke.

WHAT can be more plain, than that the *Jewish mothers* were hereby encouraged to embrace the christian doctrine, even from the thought of having their infants under the care and compassionate concern of Jesus! For, if capable of being *blessed by him*, surely capable of that *rite* which initiated into his kingdom,—
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unless any could think so preposterously, as to imagine *infants* capable of being parties in the covenant, members of the body of Christ, acknowledged subjects of his kingdom, and yet not capable of the external *mark, token, sign, or symbol* of it.—

SURELY the disciples had some lessons to learn, from these instances, *viz.* how they should themselves behave towards *infants*; otherwise, it would have been sufficient to have had infants produced, as *samples* of humility and innocency, without our Lord's *blessing* them.— But the gratifying the desire of their parents, in so express a manner, must teach what regard and respect is warranted, by his *own example*, to the infants of believers; unless any will presume to say, that our Lord's blessing these infants, was only a piece of mere complaisance, and had no manner of reason or significancy in it.—Supposing that his blessing them, was only *praying* for them, if they were proper subjects of *prayer*, they must be proper subjects of baptism, because *prayer* is an express moral mean, and therefore superior to a *positive rite*.—

II. ANOTHER encouragement for christian parents to baptize their infant-offspring, is, that declaration of St. *Peter's*, when he address'd near 3000 converts in this manner,—*Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins;—for the promise is to you, and to your CHILDREN, and to them that are afar off,*—Acts ii. 39.—

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Would not any one of us, had we been part of St. Peter's audience, have understood him thus, "*Repent*, ye that are capable of repenting, and be baptized every one of you; for the promise is not *only* to you, but to your *children*; therefore you need not confine the *initiating rite* to yourselves: for as it is the open and acknowledged claim that you yourselves have to the *promise*, baptism must be applicable to your children also, as the *promise* is to them as well as to you?"—The baptism of the Jewish converts, was a sort of cancelling the *seal* of circumcision, and why should they leave the same seal uncancell'd in their children?—It is therefore plain, that,

HE must intend to intimate to them, their childrens right to baptism along with themselves, and they must understand him so; for at the same time, and in the same breath, that he bids them *repent, and be baptized*, he tells them of *the promise being made to them, and to their children*. Had he had any *excluding* reserve in his own mind, it would have been unjustifiably wrong; for he ought to have explained himself, and not have talked of a *promise* belonging to their infant-children, whom he knew wanted no repentance, and could not believe: but *on the contrary*, he intimates, in the plainest manner, some sort of interest that their children had in the promise; and therefore, they must naturally think of applying the *rite* or *seal* to them also.—To have forbid it, would have been enough to have raised a jealousy,

jealousy, and occasion'd great and warm debates among them.—They knew that their children had partook of the initiating rite of the Mosaic covenant along with them, *i. e.* in their infancy; and if they themselves were to be initiated into the christian covenant by baptism, they would have looked upon their children, as *not enter'd* without it;—which *great difference* in the treatment of their children, could never have been pass'd over without the greatest objection and clamour. So that the supposed absolute *silence* about it, is a *violent presumption* in favour of their infants being admitted along with them to the same rite of initiation. And *moreover*, when we call to mind the *manner* in which these very people received, into their constitution, the Profelytes of the covenant; nothing but the prevalence of the most inveterate prejudice can lead us to suppose their infants were denied baptism.

Obj. XII. To this it is objected, that the christian doctrine was not calculated to *indulge* mens prejudices, but to *combat* them; as appears by many instances in the New Testament writings: and that therefore, we are not to suppose that the Jewish children were admitted to baptism. More especially, as there is no one *express* mention made of an infant's being baptized. *Nay*, that *John the Baptist* has actually combated this prejudice, by his telling the people, *Matth. iii. 9. that God*

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was able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.—

IN answer to which it may be said, that this objection has not any force; for tho' there is no express mention made of the baptizing of *one* infant, yet, from what has been offer'd, the probability lies greatly on the side of *infant-baptism*, from an impartial view of the Revelation.—

Besides, this cannot be understood, as combating the Jewish prejudices about infant-baptism; for it lies thus, the *barbinger* had taught the converts which he made, that the kingdom of the *Messiah*, was to be a noble, exalted kingdom, a *kingdom of heaven!* a kingdom of very enlarged privileges to what they as Jews enjoyed; and that it was a matter of vain boasting in them, to say within themselves, *we have Abraham for our father.* The very inanimate stones in the desert could have as good a *claim* to their being the children of *Abraham*, as they had, who wanted every moral disposition, who *rested* in their natural descent, and imagin'd, that because of this, they were the subjects of divine favour. No, says *John*, let me tell you, you are so wretchedly mistaken, that God is able to raise up of these stones, continuing such, as proper children of *Abraham*, as you are. You are only his children as born of the flesh, not in the temper and complexion of your Spirits; and as all *matter* is essentially the same, only differently modified in its parts, these

these very stones would be capable of claiming as near a relation to *Abraham*, in a proper sense, as you. Let it be observed, that this could have no manner of reference to their infants; they are not at all concern'd in the declaration; for they were not capable of *thinking in their souls*, or *in themselves*, about their being descendants of *Abraham*; nor were they capable of bringing forth fruits *meet for repentance*. So that this will not stand as an instance, in which the Jews had their prejudices *combated* about their childrens right to the initiating sign of the covenant.

III. *Parents*, who profess the christian religion, may be encouraged to dedicate and devote their infant-offspring to God, by baptism, since they are by express command to bring them up and educate them *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, Eph. vi. 4. *i. e.* they are commanded to bring them up, nourish, and feed them, with that healthy, pure, and proper instruction, that is the nurture and food of christian-children;—and *in the admonition of the Lord*, *i. e.* as the subjects of his laws. The *admonition* is to have the force of a law; (*νομοθεσια* °) the word render'd *admonition*, in its true acceptance, implies authority; especially when thus used, *the admonition of the Lord*, it signifies to put them under the mind or law of Christ.—This consideration should encourage a parent to apply the rite to his child, as it is

° Compounded of *νομο* and *θεσια*.

an acknowledgment of its being thus put by him, under the care and dominion of Jesus. The authority of Jesus over it, must be asserted in its nurture and education, as well as his tender concern for it.—

AND he may reasonably do so, because, if the baptism of his child was to be *defer'd* by him, *till after* he had thus educated and brought it up, he would either have had it mention'd, as a motive that he might use with the child, to encourage its attention, *viz.* that it should hereafter have the initiating rite—or, at least, the *standard* of the child's meetness, either from age or experience, would have been expressly ascertained:—but the *absolute silence* that there is about christian parents *deferring* the baptism of their children, till of mature or adult age, is a strong presumption, that the *time of initiating them* could not be mistaken; but was obvious from the custom of the true church for nineteen hundred years. The laws and customs of which church had always allowed of their being initiated in *infancy*; and that the condition or qualification was, the *faith of their parents*, or their *profession of the true religion*.

IV. CHRISTIAN parents may be encouraged to dedicate their infant-children to God by baptism, since those their children are actually concerned in the *doctrine of remission*, or in the *efficacy* of Christ's death. But *baptism for the remission of sins* may be properly applied to infants,

fants, tho' innocent, and under no charge of blame; since a *deliverance from death* is, in the language of Scripture, at least a part of the doctrine or benefit of remission. Any one will own this, who reads over *Rom. v.* and *1 Cor. xv.*—in which last argument of *St. Paul's* he says expressly, that *as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*, ver. 22.—Now, either infants do not become mortal through the one offence of *Adam*, and so have no concern in the death of Christ, *i. e.* in the restoring influences of it; or, if they are render'd obnoxious to death by the sin of *Adam*, and so may be said to die in him, then, as certainly as they do so, they shall be made alive in Christ, *i. e.* if all that die in *Adam*, shall be made alive in Christ, and if children die in *Adam*.—But the death of infants thus consider'd, renders them actually concerned in the death of Christ; and it must then follow, that they have a right to baptism, as the sign or seal of the doctrine of remission; unless any will say, that they are capable subjects of the benefits, but not of the external sign of those benefits.—But, forasmuch as infants were undoubtedly capable subjects of Christ's blessing, as they were actually blessed by him, so they must be capable subjects of his care and notice, as they are creatures subject to die in infancy, and will become a part of the ALL, that shall be made alive by him.

IF it should be thought presuming in any, to oppose the most current opinion of *fathers* and of *synods*, even as high as that famous
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African one of 254, wherein infants are supposed to be baptized for the remission of sins. I might refer any common reader to that very decree translated into *English*, by the *Author of the Enquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the primitive Church*^p; for that same decree determines the fitness of applying baptism to infants, as they are the workmanship of God, and have no sin that is their own.—And altho' we deny that infants can have any other folks sins imputed to them, either that of their fathers or grandfathers; or can be chargeable with any crime whatsoever, the consent of their will being essential to guilt or demerit; yet, we are willing to own, that there is a *purging* or *cleansing*^q, that may be figured by their baptism, and that is, from death or mortality. For Christ has thus purged or cleansed the consciences of adult persons from dead works, that they may live to God, *Heb. ix. 14.*

V. CHRISTIAN parents are encouraged to dedicate their children to God by baptism, forasmuch as the conduct is highly fit and reasonable; for, the church of Christ would not be *visible*,

^p Part ii. p. 46.

^q Nor is this any unscriptural sense of the word cleanse; for καθαίρειν properly signifies subversion, destruction, or demolition, and is so used by St. Paul, 2 Cor. x. 4.—for the pulling down of strong holds—and ver. 8.—for your destruction.—Thus the blood of Jesus may cleanse from sin, by demolishing or making void the dominion of death. And the word καθαίρειν, so understood, may possibly refer to the cleansing; i. e. the pulling down or demolishing the infected houses of the lepers, see Lev. xiv. 45.—

visible, if there were no external *rites* or *services*, by which its members might be distinguished. But all societies among men, that have privileges and benefits belonging to them, have some *criteria*, or *marks*, by which they acknowledge their members, and have some disqualifying laws. These have had such regard to the infant-offspring of their members, as to make laws concerning their right by *patrimony*, or how qualified or disqualified by birth;—and the *church of God* has ever admitted the infants of its subjects to be enter'd and acknowledg'd, as enfranchis'd in its *rights* and *privileges*. So that as in conformity to all *order*, divine and human, the christian church has included the infants of its members, as entitled to the *rite* of initiation: Hence the christian parent, by thus *dedicating* his offspring, behaves worthy the character of a reasonable being, that discerns the christian constitution to have *advantages* attending it, every way worthy, not only his own concern, but the *interests* of his offspring. And by applying the *rite*, he openly asserts the proper extent of the kingdom of Jesus:—whereas, withholding the *rite* from infants, supposes them as not entitled to its privileges, or not as members of Christ's *visible church*. For if baptism be the *rite* by which men are enter'd as the allowed, acknowledged members, or subjects of Christ's kingdom, it follows, that till the *rite* be applied, even men that believe the Gospel, as well as infants, for want of baptism, are not the

the *allowed, acknowledged* members of Christ's church.—But the professing christian, that sees his infant entitled, by virtue of his own profession, to baptism, will with pleasure thus dedicate it, as it is hereby admitted and owned to be entitled to the benefits of the constitution.—He will not, by denying it the *initiating rite*, express any *indifference* he has about the privileges and honours of the christian covenant;—but, *on the contrary*, express his high sense of the *great honour* confer'd on his infant-offspring, that they are thus admitted and enrolled, as *heirs* of the everlasting inheritance!—

CAN it delight the heart of a parent, to think his child is born an heir to a great estate? or that he has a son born, that shall inherit his titles?—or that shall succeed him in honourable employments?—what are all these foundations of joy, to that of a christian, that can look upon his infant-offspring, whether *male* or *female*, as equally entitled to the *honours*, the *riches*, the *pleasures* of the kingdom of Jesus?—

THIS view of baptism, if allowed to be just, will suggest to us the following things.

I. FROM what has been offered, it does plainly appear, that there was no manner of occasion for giving any *express law* to the Jews, about the *initiation* of their infant-offspring, into the christian covenant: since by *Water-Baptism* they had ever been used to initiate the children

children of converts to Judaism; and in consequence of which, *John* the harbinger came initiating them and theirs into a *new* dispensation by water, *Matth.* iii. 5.—and the *Messiah* himself was initiated into his publick ministry by water, even *before he began to combat temptation*.—All of which circumstances taken together, give us a most convincing view of the clearness of the doctrine of *infant-baptism*:—for as Christ was not tempted till after his baptism, so infants are like him baptized, before they enter upon the conflict.—And as to the *Gentiles*, the apostles being Jews, had as plain a direction about the initiation of them and theirs, as could possibly be imagin'd.—So that the giving of an *express precept* about infants initiation, was quite needless.

II. THAT *Water-Baptism* is a *rite*, which undoubtedly belongs to the christian institution. For the *dispensation of the Spirit*, or the baptism of the Spirit in the *apostolic age*, was attended with Water-Baptism, and did not at all supersede it.—

III. THAT *Water-Baptism*, as a *christian rite*, conveys not any *moral* influence; it cannot regenerate, change, or renovate the Spirit of a man; or alter his moral character towards God, *i. e.* make him qualified for happiness, who, in his own habitual frame and disposition, is impure, or unholy: for *it only can remove the filth of the flesh*.

IV. THE *qualification* for *infants* being baptized, or the *households* of any one, converted

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from infidelity or idolatry to the christian faith, was, in the apostolic age, the FAITH of a parent, master or head.

V. IT therefore may be looked upon, to be no other than an *initiating rite*; and the *intention* of it will be perverted, when it is used as a *confirming rite*.

VI. THEY must mistake the true nature of *christian baptism*, who teach, that it secures the *final salvation of men*; forasmuch as it has no moral efficacy, and rises no higher in the *qualifications* for it, even in grown persons, than their professing the christian religion, whether sincerely or not.—Every unprejudiced mind must allow, that the Gospel itself, is a *much more important mean* of mens salvation, than *baptism* can be; and yet, many will finally perish, who have been favoured with the *New Testament* in their own language, and who might have found eternal life in it.

VII. THOSE churches, who require a *moral qualification*, as a necessary pre-requisite to baptism, seem to have no authority from Scripture for their demand, and are wise above what is written. For all, who profess'd the christian religion, or to believe in Jesus, whether they did so, or not, in reality, were entitled to baptism, both they and their households.—They therefore act a presumptuous part, who refuse to baptize any, whose parents, masters, or head, do openly profess the christian religion.—Such should not baptize at all; for if SINCERITY be made by them a necessary pre-requisite to baptism,

baptism, it is impossible any one of them can, with certain propriety, baptize the infant of any parent; he cannot, unless he has an *infal- libly clear discernment* of his Spirit.—Nor can any, upon this principle, be able to judge of the fitness of any *adult* person for baptism.

VIII. THEY mistake, who imagine, that baptism is *improper* and *unfit* for the offspring of christian parents, because of their *being the branches of an holy root*;—for it is this holiness, that, in the language of the Revelation, qualifies their offspring for baptism: or, *Water-Baptism*, when applied to an infant of christian parents, does, in its own nature, declare, that its parent, or parents, is, or are christians.—

IX. THE infant of a christian parent, has not so properly its privileges *enlarged* by baptism, as *asserted*; for baptism only asserts its right to the blessings of the christian covenant, which it may either *use well* or *abuse*, when it becomes a moral agent;—unless

X. WE suppose, that the parent of such child is influenc'd, by such act of dedication, to *greater circumspection* and *care* in its nurture and education; if so, then baptism will appear to have *increased* the advantages of the infant.

XI. THERE is an apparent *decency* and *fitness* in having an initiating rite applied to the infants of christians; since no good constitution of *human* government, and none of the *divine*, (since he has had a separate, distinguished people in the world) have ever neglected appointing *measures of qualification*, for their as-

certaining the *right of infants* to the benefits of their communities.—

XII. THE imputation of *original sin* to children, and the asserting that they are, by nature, and as born into the world, the deserved objects of *God's wrath and damnation*, has been the *fatal, delusive source* of those ridiculous doctrines of *Water-Baptism*, which teach, that it can do *inconceivably more* than *put away the filth of the flesh*;—that it can change the *very nature* of the subject, and so alter its *state* towards God, as that, of a child of *wrath and damnation*, baptism makes it a child of *favour and salvation*.—

For instance, the PAPISTS are so fond of displaying their *spiritual sorcery and incantation*, that they have made the Sacraments to give *grace*, in their language, *ex opere operato*; that is to say, they give grace by the efficacious virtue of the actions performed, or words spoken in the administration of the *rite*.

AND what they intend by giving grace, *ex opere operato*, may be learnt from an express decree of their *Trent Council*, which is, “ that
“ not only all sin is so taken away by baptism,
“ as not to be imputed, but it leaves no sin
“ inherent, nothing that can be imputed as a
“ sin to those who are baptized *.”

No wonder men have been, and are so extravagantly fond of themselves, on account of their baptism,—even so as to rely upon it for their *security* or claim of eternal salvation! and
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* Counc. Trid. Sess. 5. decret. 5.

all this, without concerning themselves in the *moral claim* of this positive rite, *viz. the answer of a good conscience towards God!*——

NOR need it become matter of surprize, that, when the *priests* had thus imposed on the weakness of their *charge*, by implanting and rooting in them this leading principle of superstition, they should *add* some actions of their own, with *SPECIAL signification*; as that of *exsufflation*, or breathing hard upon the party, to exorcise and conjure the devil out of him,—putting salt into his mouth, and anointing him upon the crown of his head with holy *chrism*, &c. all to express the *great feats* that were done for the infant.—And that the whole virtue may not be supposed to be only in removing his guilt, and driving the devil out of him; they have actions expressive of strong resolutions that they implant in him, by signing him with the *sign of a crucifix*.—By all which, these great dealers in magic, render themselves of unspeakable importance.

THE whole of this vile superstructure is founded on a most enormous and corrupt foundation,—*viz.* that impious doctrine of God's workmanship, being by nature, and as it comes out of his hands, *perverse, degenerate, and diabolical!* just as if the *all-holy, righteous, and good creator*, should make beings of a nature opposite to those constitutions of things, under which he designed to place them! or, as if he did not make the human offspring for himself, but for the *devil*? Nay, one would be inclined

inclined to believe from the *doctrine*, that if it is true, we are properly the workmanship of the *devil*, and not of God;—and if so, those *spiritual exorcists* above-mention'd, are guilty of violating the *laws of right*, in dispossessing the devil out of his own property; or in taking from him what, by nature, is truly his own. But,

XIII. If the *inventions* of men, or *conjurations* of priests, who want to have possession of the *souls* of men, in order the more effectually to have the command of their passions and purfes, take place, we may expect to hear of their *sacred* and *consecrated hands* giving virtue to the water, and making it *much more* efficacious, than from the hands of the apostles, who could not make it reach farther, than *the putting away the filth of the flesh*.—For, notwithstanding the *apostles* could make *no more* of baptism, than an *initiating rite* to a grown person, and to his offspring or household; yet, these *Gentlemen* pretend to a *much greater* efficacy in their administrations: for the very reason, that they had their *ordination* from the hands of such, who, in an *undoubtedly lineal succession*, derived their powers from such, who derived their powers from the apostles;—and therefore, since a *snow-ball* greatly enlarges by long rolling in the snow, it follows, that the apostolical powers have greatly swell'd by tradition.—Upon such sort of *pinnacle* principles, you may now and then expect to hear of grown persons being REBAPTIZED.

Their

A Plea for Infants.

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Their *first baptism* has not had water enough, or has been only the *baptism of water*,—and performed by the hands of persons, who did indeed believe the doctrine of Jesus, but were not believers in *their sense*; and therefore, had not proper authority; never had *apostolical ordination*, i. e. never received the *gifts of the Holy Ghost* from episcopal, or truly authorized hands.—Nay, what is yet much more marvellous, in some countries may be found, men claiming these apostolical conveyances, who are such *perfect adepts*, in the art of applying water with a *regenerating* efficacy, that they can *half baptize*, i. e. they can, they say, apply water just *so far*, as will secure the *happy state* of an infant, should it die with that baptism; and yet, if it should live, it requires to have another *half* added, i. e. it must be *better done*, else the *first saving baptism* will not be sufficient for the purposes of holy living among men!—And we may be assured, that no man is *sufficient*, or can be *sufficient for these things*, unless he has actually had conveyed to him some very *extraordinary* impartments.—But to give every man his due, it is incumbent on me to take notice of the conspicuous virtues of these *wonderful apostolical men*; and therefore I would remark on the uncommon modesty of some of these uncommon men, who glory in their BEING CALLED OF GOD, AS WAS AARON; and are so humble, as to lay the foundation of their *claims* upon the *Levitical Priesthood*,—which must be expressive of their great humility; since

since we are assured, *that there was NO MANNER OF PERFECTION belonging to that order!* see and compare *Heb.* v. 4. with *ch.* vii. 11, 19.—

BUT, to add no more,

XIV. WOULD men, who call themselves *christians*, form their notions of *Water-Baptism* from the plain doctrine of it, as it lies in the Revelation; no objection, no contempt, no ridicule, would be able to fasten upon it: but it must appear worthy of that rational, pure, benevolent scheme of truth, which the *Son of God* has exhibited to men.—

P. S. IT might have been expected, that I should have took some notice of the *MODE of baptism*; but a small pamphlet lately published, entitled, *Plunging a Subject of Bigotry, when made essential to Baptism*, has made that an unnecessary talk.—

FINIS.

